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C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 007098

SIPDIS

OSD FOR RICARDEL

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/12/2013

TAGS: PREL MARR TU

SUBJECT: CAUCASUS WORKING GROUP PRESENTS AN OPPORTUNITY TO
RENEW COOPERATION WITH TURKEY

(U) Classified by Pol-Mil Counselor Tim Betts, reasons 1.5,
b/d.

¶1. (C) Summary: The Turks came to the Nov. 7 Caucasus Working Group (CWG) working-level meeting armed with specific proposals for US-Turkish cooperation. The US should reciprocate at the Nov. 17 CWG in Williamsburg. Over the next seven months, the two sides should work towards having several new programs ready to announce at the time of the President's visit to Turkey for the NATO Istanbul Summit.
End Summary.

¶2. (C) On November 7, a working level meeting of the US-Turkey Caucasus Working Group met in Ankara to lay the groundwork for a full CWG on November 17 in Williamsburg, VA. The Turkish side was led by TGS/J-5 Chief of Bilateral Relations Cpt. (Navy) Ogurlu with additional representation from TGS and MFA. The Turks presented detailed briefings on Turkey's extensive security assistance to Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Kazakhstan (see DAO septel for details) along with specific areas of cooperation with the US that would augment their efforts, such as facility improvements at some of the academies being established by the Turks.

¶3. (C) The US side was opened by A/DASD Jim McDougall and continued by EUCOM/J-5 Col. Heady, with participation from OSD and EUCOM, as well as the Embassy, Defense Attaché's Office, and Office of Defense Cooperation. A/DASD McDougall set the stage for getting the CWG back on track after a year-long hiatus by suggesting that both sides focus on future cooperation instead of the reasons the CWG has been moribund for the past year (e.g. OIF). He elicited agreement from the GOT that the group should decide whether refocus cooperative efforts on one or two countries, or continue to try to expand the cooperation to Kazakhstan. The Turks also echoed McDougall's proposal that more day-to-day cooperation should be carried out at the working level by DAOs and ODCs in the Caucasus (comment: a refreshing change from Ogurlu's predecessor). Col. Heady briefed the Turkish side on new EUCOM concepts including, the Georgia Capabilities Enhancement Program, the Caspian Clearinghouse and the Caspian Guard. EUCOM and OSD noted preliminarily that many of the cooperative activities proposed by the Turks looked promising. Both sides agreed to an agenda for the Nov. 17 meeting.

¶4. (C) Comment and Recommendation: The Turks came prepared with detailed information on where they have expended their resources, where they plan to expend them in the future, and how the US could fill the gaps if so desired. However, they were caught off balance by the conceptual and intricate nature of the US briefings and seemed perplexed that the US offered no specific proposals for future bilateral cooperation. Embassy Ankara recommends that OSD and EUCOM screen the Turkish cooperation proposals carefully in order to approve some of them at the Nov. 17 meeting. In addition, the US side should come to Williamsburg with concrete proposals that will compliment US efforts in the region for the Turks to consider. We also urge the participants at Williamsburg to agree to work over the next seven months to reach agreement on new concrete projects that could be announced at the time of the President's visit to Turkey for the NATO Istanbul Summit.

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